

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A railroad grade crossing assembly for blocking access across a railroad crossing, comprising:

gate means connectable to a stanchion and movable between a generally upright position to permit access across the railroad crossing and a generally horizontal position for blocking access across the railroad crossing; and

programmable electronic means for controlling operation of said gate means.

2. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said programmable electronic means and is operable to receive programming instructions for implementation by said programmable electronic means.

3. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said programmable electronic means comprises a programmable logic controller coupled to one or more relays.

4. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising means for electronically monitoring usage and/or status of the assembly.

5. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 4, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said means for electronically monitoring and is operable to receive data from said means for electronically monitoring.

6. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 4, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said means for electronically monitoring and is operable to transmit data generated by said means for electronically monitoring to a remote monitoring station.

7. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising one or more cameras for visually monitoring the assembly and/or the area around the assembly.

8. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said gate means includes lights that incorporate a bulletproof material.

9. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said gate means includes lights and a bulletproof covering for protecting said lights.

10. A railroad grade crossing assembly for blocking access across a railroad crossing, comprising:

gate means connectable to a stanchion and movable between a generally upright position to permit access across the railroad crossing and a generally horizontal position for blocking access across the railroad crossing; and

telescopic arm means incorporated into said gate means for automatically completely closing the railroad crossing when said gate means is in said generally horizontal position, said telescopic arm means being movably incorporated within said gate means and being operable to extend from said gate means each time said crossing assembly is to block access across said crossing and retracts each time said crossing assembly is to permit access across said crossing; and

programmable electronic means for controlling operation of said gate means and said telescopic arm means.

11. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said programmable electronic means and is operable to receive programming instructions for implementation by said programmable electronic means.

12. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, wherein said programmable electronic means comprises a programmable logic controller coupled to one or more relays.

13. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, further comprising means for electronically monitoring usage and/or status of the assembly.

14. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 13, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said means for electronically monitoring and is operable to receive data from said means for electronically monitoring.

15. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 13, further comprising a wireless link that is coupled to said means for electronically monitoring and is operable to transmit data generated by said means for electronically monitoring to a remote monitoring station.

16. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 13, further comprising one or more cameras for visually monitoring the assembly and/or the area around the assembly.

17. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, wherein said gate means and/or said telescopic arm means includes lights that incorporate a bulletproof material.

18. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, wherein said gate means and/or said telescopic arm means includes lights and a bulletproof covering for protecting said lights.

19. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 10, further comprising an electric motor for extending and retracting said telescopic arm means, and wherein said programmable electronic means is operable to control said motor.

20. A railroad grade crossing assembly as recited in claim 19, wherein said motor is coupled to said telescopic arm means through a clutch that is released upon failure of said motor's power supply.